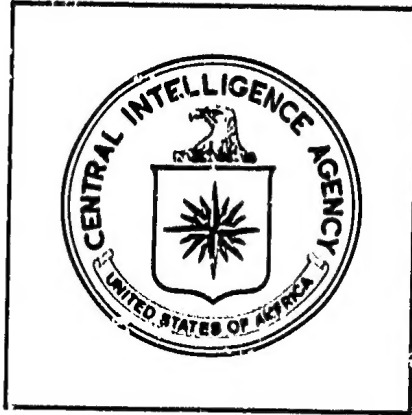


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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE

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Soviets Relaxed on Middle East

The acting chief of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Near East division was unusually relaxed in a recent discussion with a US official in Moscow. He reaffirmed what has been apparent for some time, that Moscow does not intend to push for an early reconvening of the Middle East conference.

He suggested that Moscow believes the Middle East initiative again rests with the US and that there is little the Soviets can do at the moment to affect the situation significantly. His remarks are in line with the minimal public attention Moscow has been giving the Middle East situation.

The Soviet official, however, reiterated the Soviet contention that attempts at a Middle East settlement will prove futile unless the interests of other parties, including the Soviets, are taken into account. He claimed to be "astonished" that the US seemed to be ignoring the Palestinian question, which he said was the central issue of the conflict. Although the Soviet official suggested several ways the matter of Palestinian attendance could be handled at Geneva, the implication of his remarks was that the Soviets retain the option of intensifying their support of Palestinian demands if the US continues to exclude Moscow from the settlement process.

The official made no effort to use the developing Soviet-Libyan relationship to suggest that the Soviets had a new iron in the Middle East fire, or that Moscow would move to support the "rejectionists" if it continued to be cut out of the negotiating process. Responding to a question, he said that the Soviet position on a Middle East settlement had been "made clear" to the Libyans by Premier Kosygin.

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Brezhnev's Wartime Authority

In time of war, Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Brezhnev will become the Supreme Commander in Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces, according to a Soviet military officer on the SALT Standing Consultative Commission (SCC).

The office recently told a US adviser to the SCC that Defense Minister Grechko is now commander in chief and would remain so as long as the Soviet Union is not at war. He went on to state, however, that in the event of war Brezhnev would follow Stalin's example and assume command of the armed forces, becoming chairman of the *Stavka* (the wartime organization of military and political leaders which constitutes the Supreme High Command).

This new information is consistent with reports provided by high-ranking Soviet officers in the mid-60s, shortly after Khrushchev's ouster, when Brezhnev was identified as the wartime commander. In 1966 and 1967, however, a series of articles appeared in [redacted]

[redacted] Soviet military publications that seemed to conflict with this description of Brezhnev's wartime role. The articles reflected the military high command's concern about the timely provision for command authority in the event of emergency. The military apparently wanted a predesignated supreme commander in chief to whom they could turn as a source of political-military authority in emergencies, and expressed the need for an institutionalized supreme command in peacetime, capable of timely response in military crisis situations. Brezhnev, however, was emphasizing collectivity in leadership matters, as he still does to some degree. Unlike Khrushchev and Stalin before him, Brezhnev seemed to shun public identification as "supreme commander in chief." In fact, a remark identifying the General Secretary as

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supreme commander in chief designate in the 1963 and 1964 edition of Sokolovskiy's *Military Strategy* was deleted from the 1968 edition. The consistent identification of Brezhnev as supreme commander in chief only in wartime, even now, when Brezhnev is clearly in a position of political pre-eminence, continues to highlight the political sensitivity of the position.

The new clarification by the Soviet officer indicates that Brezhnev is indeed regarded as the wartime commander, and the consistency of the new explanation with earlier information indicates that Brezhnev has been so designated since at least 1965. Apparently the central issue of the controversy in 1966-1967 was not the need for a supreme commander in chief, but rather the need for an institutionalized supreme command even in peacetime.

The controversy seems to have been resolved by October 1967, when Grechko published an article stating that organizational questions were being dealt with along lines established by Lenin and based on the Soviets' World War II experience. The Soviet SCC officer's reference to the *Stavka* is one of many from a variety of sources which have appeared in this context since 1967. This may indicate that a *Stavka*-like supreme command was formally established by late 1967.



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East Germany: Doctrine of Two German
Nations Reiterated

As the US and East Germany prepare to resume negotiations on a consular convention, East Berlin is again stressing the concept of two distinct German nations. The first round of negotiations in February was complicated by the East German demand for inclusion of a definition of nationality. Now, as then, professors of the party's Institute for Social Sciences are the authors of the commentaries.

Officials in Pankow are seeking the recognition of a separate East German nationality in consular conventions with all non-communist states. They hope to refute Bonn's claim, under article 116 of the West German constitution, to represent all citizens of "German nationality." The inclusion of a nationality clause in the consular convention negotiated with Austria early this year was touted as an important precedent and predictably provoked indignation in Bonn. [REDACTED]

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The doctrine of two "German nations" is more than ammunition for East Berlin's squabbles with Bonn. It is of paramount importance in establishing the political legitimacy of the East German regime. Since assuming power in May 1971, party chief Honecker has worked hard to develop the idea of a separate East German identity. Last fall, the East German constitution was amended to remove all outmoded concepts of reunification and references to a single German nation. The East Germans can, therefore, be expected to maintain a tough line on the nationality clause when negotiations with the US reopen in East Berlin next month. [REDACTED]

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Yugoslavia and the Communist Conference

The Yugoslav ambassador in Bucharest claims that Belgrade will send a delegation to the next session of the commission charged with drafting a final document for the European Communist conference. He says that a new show of Soviet flexibility has prompted the Yugoslavs to decide, after all, to attend the working group now slated to be held in East Berlin next week.

Although Moscow has been sufficiently flexible to keep preparations for the formal meeting moving ahead, the Yugoslavs and other independent parties have no illusions about the real intentions of the Soviet party. They know that whatever Moscow's present tactics are, the Kremlin will try to use the formal conference to bind all participants to a final document reflecting Soviet policies and objectives. Even if it is present at the next drafting session, a Yugoslav delegation could decide not to attend the conference itself.

The Yugoslav ambassador cited the visit to Romania from May 20 to 23 of Aleksander Grlickov, his country's chief negotiator for the conference, as proof that Belgrade and Bucharest still see eye-to-eye on resisting Soviet aims. He expressed the personal opinion that while Romania would probably attend the European Communist conference, it would not sign the final document. Bucharest refused to sign several documents at the international Communist conference held in Moscow in June 1969.

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